

Minnesota Modified Student Oral Language Observation Matrix: MN-SOLOM

		1	2	3	4	5	Score
Listen	Academic Comprehension	Understands little or no simple grade level content terminology or academic discourse.	Has difficulty following grade level content terminology and academic discourse, even when spoken slowly and with frequent repetition and rephrasing.	Understands most grade level content terminology and academic discourse when spoken at slower than normal speeds with some repetition and rephrasing.	Understands most grade level content terminology at normal speed, although occasional repetition and rephrasing may be necessary.	Understands grade level content terminology and academic discourse without difficulty.	
	Social Comprehension	Understands little or no social conversation.	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only social conversation spoken slowly and with frequent repetition and rephrasing.	Understands most of what is said in social conversations at slower than normal speed with some repetition and rephrasing.	Understands social conversation, although occasional repetition and rephrasing may be necessary.	Understands social conversation in a variety of settings, including classroom directions.	
Speak	Fluency	Speech is so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant, often gives up due to language limitations; gives mainly one or two word answers.	Speech in social conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by student's search for correct manner of expression. Uses short phrases and sentences.	Speech in social conversation and classroom discussion generally fluent, with occasional lapses while student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in social conversation and classroom discussion fluent and effortless; approximates that of a native English speaker.	
	Vocabulary	Vocabulary limitations are so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Difficult to understand because of misuse of words and very limited vocabulary.	Frequent use of wrong words; conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Occasional use of inappropriate terms and/or rephrasing because of inadequate vocabulary.	Use of academic vocabulary and idioms approximate those of a native English speaker.	
	Pronunciation	Pronunciation and intonation make speech virtually unintelligible.	Pronunciation and intonation make speech difficult to understand; must frequently repeat in order to be understood.	Pronunciation and intonation necessitate concentration by the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.	Usually intelligible, although pronunciation or intonation may slightly interfere with understanding.	Pronunciation and intonation approximate those of a native English speaker. Accent may be present but does not interfere with intelligibility.	
	Grammar	Errors in grammar and word order so severe that speech is virtually unintelligible.	Difficult to understand because of errors in grammar and word order; must either rephrase or restrict speech to basic patterns.	Frequent errors in grammar and word order; meaning occasionally obscured.	Occasional errors in grammar or word order; meaning not obscured.	Grammar and word order approximate that of a native English speaker.	

Note: The native English speaker in column 5 is the *same age* as the LEP student being rated.

Points to Keep in Mind when Using the MN-SOLOM

Read all instructions before beginning assessment.

1. Consider all situations—both informal, social and formal, instructional—in which you have observed the child. **Based on your observation** of the student, indicate for each category the level that best describes the student's abilities.
2. Consider the most **recent and consistent level** of ability that you have observed. When it is difficult to choose between two levels, score down. For example, if you think the student is between a two and a three, give the student a two for that domain.
3. Level 1 is a student who has very limited English oral skills; a newcomer to English. Levels 4 and 5 are considered fluent English speakers (approximating that of native English speakers).
4. Think of only one category of language ability at a time.
5. Start with the students you know the best.
6. Think of only oral proficiency; don't let the child's reading and writing ability come to mind as you rate.
7. Don't let the levels of ability of other children in the class influence your rating; i.e. Make sure you aren't giving a child a high score simply because he/she is one of the best students in a class of all lower ability students.
8. Remember that Level 5 is the level of ability expected of a *native English-speaking child* who is not bilingual and who is of the *same age* as the child you are rating.
9. Requirements:
 - a. Must be a licensed person
 - b. The MN-SOLOM should only be administered by persons who score at level 4 or above in all categories in English (Fluent English speaker)
 - c. Student must be observed during the observation window
10. Recommendations:
 - a. Have more than one evaluator do the assessment to promote dialogue and define academic listening and speaking
 - b. Place working copy of MN-SOLOM in student's cum/district folder

Notes: Persons who are fluent English speakers and who are familiar with the student to be rated should use the MN-SOLOM. Ideally the teacher will rate the English language proficiency of a student after several weeks of instruction. There is no test to be administered; rather, the teacher needs a few quiet moments to reflect on the language skills of the given student and to select the description that most closely matches the current proficiency of that student. The teacher uses descriptions on five-point scale to rate the student's language performance in six domains: academic comprehension, social comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

A rating is immediately available and can be used to group and regroup students for ESL, to report student progress, or to guide refinements to instructional methods and materials.

SOLOM Interview Protocol
(Optional)

1. Would you tell me your full name, please?
2. How old are you?
3. What country are you from? How long have you been in the United States? (*If appropriate*)
4. Tell me about yourself.
5. Do you remember your first day at school? Will you tell me about the first day? What was it like? How did you feel that first day?
6. What is your favorite time at school? What do you do? Why is it your favorite?
7. Tell me what you like to do at home. Tell me a story about something that has happened to you.
8. Tell me about a book that you've read.
9. Have student narrate a brief story based on a picture sequence. (*Requires materials preparation*)
10. Have student interpret visual material such as a graph, chart, or diagram. (*Requires materials preparation*)
11. Tell me about a process you like to do. Have student give directions or describe a process. (*For example: Tell me about making chocolate chip cookies, or how do you play Four Square?*)
12. Have student express an opinion and present rationale for that opinion.
13. What would you like to do when you grow up?
14. Do you have any questions?

MN-SOLOM Levels of Oral Proficiency

Total Points MN-SOLOM Score	Speaking/Listening Oral Proficiency Level
6-8	Level 1, Beginner
9-14	Level 2, Early Intermediate
15-21	Level 3, Intermediate
22-26	Level 4, Early Advanced
27-30	Level 5, Advanced